

## CGRS Microtech PEDISK II

### A Product Review

by Doug Haluza

Type: Hardware

Model: PET/CBM new model, Basic 3.0 or 4.0, 16K or 32K

Source: CGRS Microtech

P. O. Box 102

Langhorne PA 19407

Price: \$595 for Model 540: 5.25" Single Drive, Double Density (143K)

\$795 for Model 580 5.25" Single Drive, Quad Density (286K)

\$1095 for Model 877 8" Single Drive, IBM Standard (295K)

PEDISK II is a low cost IBM compatible disk drive for the PET/CBM, AIM and SYM. It interfaces to the PET through a small interface board (similar to the Spacemaker) that plugs into the \$E000 socket inside the PET. The BASIC ROM that was in that socket plugs into the board. A ribbon cable connects the interface board to up to three 5.25" or 8" disk drives. The drives are housed in a grey metal case that sits beside the PET.

The board has a 2K DOS (Disk Operating System) ROM that adds extra commands to BASIC like the Universal DOS program for the CBM disk does, but PEDISK commands are preceded by an '!' instead of '@' or '>'. These commands are:

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!LOAD loads a program from the disk into memory
!SAVE saves a program on the disk
!OPEN forms a sequential or relative data file on the disk.
!INPUT reads a data record from the disk
!PRINT stores a data record on the disk
!CLOSE ends a sequential or relative file on the disk
!LIST gives a directory of files on the disk
!RUN loads and runs a program from the disk
!SYS calls the DOS monitor which contains extra utilities
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Niether the disk commands, nor the diskettes themselves are compatible with the 2040/4040 or 8050. The disks use IBM format, which is the same format used on the TRS-80 and many minicomputers. A software routine is available to read or write TRS-80 5.25" diskettes. CP/M and 8" IBM compatible data files can also be read and written by the PEDISK. This allows the PET to be used for remote entry of information that is later transferred to another larger computer for analysis. For example, PETs equipped with PEDISKS are being used by a parking lot franchise to log parking data and cash tendered to the PEDISK. At the end of the day the diskette is brought to the company's main computer for financial accounting, trend forecasting, etc.

The incompatibility in disk commands is a big problem for people who want to use 'canned' software packages. Although it is not too hard to modify a BASIC program that uses the CBM disk for the PEDISK, it is not trivial either. If the package is written in machine language it is nearly impossible to convert it. Fortunately the people at CGRS Microtech recognize this and are committed to making software packages available for PEDISK. Currently the MAE assembler from Eastern House Software as well as the Papermate Word Processor, Flex File Data Base Manager, KMMM Pascal, and EARL assembler, all from AB computers, are available for PEDISK. Wordpro 3+ and 4+ will also be available soon.

PEDISK is a practical alternative to the CBM disk drive with several advantages. PEDISK is moderately less expensive for a single drive system. If a second drive is needed the PEDISK system is significantly less expensive than the CBM dual disk. The second drive and even a third drive can be added at any time; 5.25" and 8" drives can be used at the same time with the same controller. PEDISK loads programs directly to memory, this makes it up to four times faster than the CBM disk. Although the disks are not compatible with CBM disks, their compatibility with other computers can be very useful for many applications.